Catriona Cunningham
The Higher Education Academy, UK

The role of performance and narration in translating professional standards into practice: four different analytical models. (0250)

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Abstract:

The work of The Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the rising importance of educational research for academics across all the disciplines highlight a shift in higher education towards the need for further professional recognition of the role of teaching for the academic. Barnett and Napoli's edited collection of essays (2008) explore the changing academic identity in different ways, and draw attention the increasing fuzziness around the role of the academic. Using material gathered in three workshops across the Nations run by the arts and humanities and by the social sciences cluster at the HEA, this presentation focuses on these blurred boundaries, looking specifically at language to begin to explore how academics in the arts and humanities and social sciences today translate themselves across these boundaries.

Overview:

Collini's provocative 'What are universities for?' (2012) echoes the opening lines of Ron Barnett's article 'Just what is it to *be* a university' (2011). Both Barnett and Collini probe the epistemological nature of the university in 21st century in a continuously changing landscape. Yet academics working in those universities seldom have the space or time to explore these questions in their own work. The need for academics to narrate their academic practice in their portfolio of evidence for the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) offers the opportunity to reflect critically on their own learning and teaching. In recognition of this, our HEA workshops encourage participants from across the arts and humanities and the social sciences to explore their professional identity through a series of critical and creative activities. To engage with this material often requires participants to cross disciplinary boundaries as they express themselves in a language that is not necessarily familiar. This

process is precisely what happens when one begins to learn a language and forge an identity on unfamiliar and uncertain territory. Indeed, drawing on Cronin's work Across the Lines (2006), this presentation will argue that just as the translator must move between languages to create meaning, so too does the academic in our 21st century higher education institution.

HE Teacher as translator?

The literature suggests that while there is a need to engage with educational research in higher education and become 'scholarly teachers' (Weller, 2010), the participants in our workshops are often searching for the language with which to express their professional practice. In her account of learning the French language, Nancy Huston expresses the difficulty of finding the right words, using the right tools to express herself clearly. The following quotation illustrates the fear this can evoke:

> Les dictionnaires nous induisent en confusion, nous jettent dans l'effrayant magma de l'entre-deux-langues, là où les mots ne veulent pas dire, là où ils refusent de dire, là où ils commencent à dire une chose et finissent par en dire une tout autre. (*Perdre le Nord*, p. 13)

> Dictionaries lead us astray, throwing us into the terrifying magma of being in-between two languages in the very place where words don't mean anything, or refuse to say, where they start meaning one thing and end up saying something completely different.

Huston implies that words are not living objects that control and resist us but makes it clear that moving into another language is disorienting and forces one to move away from concrete ground into a place that is much less solid and possibly even treacherous. If we cannot translate ourselves, we are indeed 'lost in translation' (Hoffman, 1991. See also Clifford (1997), Phipps (2011). Drawing on data from the workshops and follow-up interviews, this paper will demonstrate how, in the same way, this incertitude could summarise the movement between our research and teaching and even between lecturers and students.

Implications:

By using theories of translation and language learning to look at how academics articulate their changing roles and expectations in 21st century higher education institutions, this presentation explores lecturers' words and images to identify how they translate themselves in and between their different academic roles. This approach offers a way for the academic to negotiate and even navigate his/her path in the university of the future.

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